DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Refer to: OEHE

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 2004-06

AREA-WIDE EMERGENCY CODE SYSTEM

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1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this circular is to standardize emergency codes throughout Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS). Standardizing the codes will make it easier for all staff to know their role in an emergency situation. The use of the same, simple codes throughout the AAIHS improves communication between sites and facilitates response if staff is mobilized from one site to another, in the event of large or extended emergency.

2. **BACKGROUND**. Currently, each facility uses different colors and/or names for emergencies, with the exception of code red and code blue. This can result in confusion in the event of an emergency as some staff or other providers work in more that one location in the AAIHS {As an example, at one facility a code green means a security incident, at another it means a disaster and at another it means an emergency caesarian section, while some facilities don't have a code green}. Use of standard nomenclature for emergency codes allows AAIHS facilities to:

   a.   Communicate effectively with each other regarding emergency situations.

   b.   Communicate efficiently with staff mobilized to assist in an emergency at another
        AAIHS facility.

   c.   Improve response from staff at all sites for continued functioning during
        emergencies.

Distribution: All Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service Manual Holders
Date: September 29, 2004

3.   **POLICY.**   AAIHS will use the same color system for emergency codes at all facilities (see list below). AAIHS recognizes that standardizing the codes for the area will be benefical for all employees to know their role in an emergency situation. The emergency plan will address the safety of employees, patients, and visitors at the IHS facilities and the continuation of health care delivery to our customers under all emergency conditions by creating a standardized set of emergency response codes.

4.   **RESPONSIBILITY**.   AAIHS management at all levels will support the use of emergency codes, including budgeting for equipment and training. All AAIHS employees will be responsible for knowing the codes and their respective roles in each type of emergency. All facilities will have emergency plans in place using the standardized codes. All facilities will perform emergency drills utilizing the standardized codes according to their accreditation requirements.

5.   **EMERGENCY CODE SYSTEM.** The following standard emergency code system will be used throughout the AAIHS.

> **CODE RED**   **FIRE**
>
> **CODE BLUE**   **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**
>
> **CODE GREEN**   **DISASTERS (INTERNAL & EXTERNAL)**
>
> **CODE PINK**   **MISSING INFANT/CHILD**
>
> **CODE BLACK**   **BOMB THREAT**
>
> **CODE BROWN**   **SECURITY/DISTURBANCE**

6.   **EFFECTIVE DATE.**   This policy is effective on the date signature and shall remain in effect until canceled or superceded.

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James L. Toya M.P.H.
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